

Interest Announcement

Southern Region **BLAST** Program **B**uilding **L**eaders for **A** Solid **T**omorrow 2006

Opening Date: July 13, 2005

Closing Date: August 26, 2005

Who May Apply: GS-12, 13, and 14 grade level Meteorologists, Hydrologists, Information Technology staff, and the Electronics staff in NWS Southern Region and the Storm Prediction Center. (To be eligible to apply you must be at the minimum of GS-12 by the closing date.) MICs, HICs, and Southern Region Headquarters Division Chiefs are not eligible to apply for this program.

Application Address: Department of Commerce, MASC
Human Resources Division, MC21B
325 Broadway
Boulder, CO 80305-3328

This announcement is to solicit application materials from interested candidates for participation in the SR BLAST 2006 Program as described below.

Program

The Southern Region has established a program to invest in, and develop the leadership capabilities of committed employees in utilizing progressive leadership knowledge and concepts of current leaders. Leadership and management are different functions requiring different knowledge, skills, and abilities. Managers follow established rules and guidelines to produce desired outcomes and they ensure predictability, order, efficiency, and consistency. Leaders, on the other hand, convert vision into reality by improving the life, conditions, and general well being of the organization and its members - both external and internal to the NWS.

The foundation of BLAST is built around current field and regional leaders sharing their progressive leadership knowledge and concepts with BLAST participants. Through continued investment in the leadership qualities of NWS staff, the local office, region, and agency will evolve towards progressive leadership concepts in the future. Additionally, BLAST serves as an excellent complement to the NOAA/NWS Diversity and EEO programs, further enhancing the

concepts and goals of these programs. NOAA Human Resources has ruled that the regional component of BLAST meets the requirements of NAO-202-411 for the second 40 hours of new supervisor training.

BLAST utilizes a two pronged approach—one at the local office level and a formal program at the regional level. This announcement is for the formal regional program called BLAST.

Regional BLAST

BLAST for 2006 will provide formal training, and coaching that will allow participants to be better, pro-active, and sensitive leaders. BLAST is a two-year program with up to 14 new participants entering the program each year. The BLAST workshop begins with a highly interactive and intensive one-week leadership workshop in Atlanta, GA. The BLAST 2006 Workshop will be conducted February 12-17, 2006.

The goal of BLAST is to provide the participants with the foundation and tools to further enhance their leadership capabilities. BLAST is not the end, but rather the launching pad for additional reading, study, and learning on progressive leadership concepts. Participation in BLAST does not in any way provide participants priority consideration in future recruitment actions.

Since some personal development time will be required for studying leadership principles, BLAST candidates should be technically and scientifically comfortable when they apply for the program. BLAST applicants also should have demonstrated initiative with respect to leadership sensitivities. This includes aggressively meeting customer/partner needs, thinking strategically, exercising team leadership concepts, demonstrating interpersonal skills, embracing change for operational improvement, supporting diversity, and exercising business acumen.

Eligibility: BLAST applications will be accepted for consideration from all eligible individuals (as noted above in “Who May Apply”). All applications must be received by the closing date of **August 26, 2005** (“see Deadline for Application Packages” on page 4) and include all materials outlined below under “Application Package.” To be considered for BLAST, applicants must coordinate and gain the support of their first-line supervisor. Support by the supervisor indicates he/she will provide local guidance to the participant as well as assigning and evaluating shortterm local assignments. Every effort will be made to consider mission operations as top priority and time away from office will be reasonably minimized. As part of the acceptance process, each BLAST candidate must have completed, or has managed a local project or program that has demonstrated leadership potential and teamwork capabilities. This could take many forms including serving as team leader for local projects, as storm coordinator during hazardous weather events, or leading teams to resolve operational issues.

Selection Process: Applicants' packages will be screened by a team of field managers. This team will be composed of field leaders and one SRH Division Chief. A Human Resource Adviser from the Boulder Human Resources Office will be a consultant for the team. The initial selection team will narrow the list of candidates and conduct the interviews of the semifinalists. **Selected candidates should be notified no later than the latter part of October 2005.**

Application Package: To be considered for the BLAST 2006 Program you must submit ALL of the following:

1. A one page cover letter indicating: a) why you wish to be considered for BLAST; b) your professional goals; and c) your view of future challenges to the NWS.
2. A description of your work experience over the past five years (prepare a short paragraph - no more than five lines - describing your work for each position held during the past five years).
3. Up to one page description of educational attainment including college level and/or technical training (only above the basic degree requirements for meteorologists and/or hydrologists) qualifications plus any additional leadership, teamwork, management, and/or diversity courses. You are encouraged to highlight in this section whether the education/training you have completed has been at agency or personal expense and whether it was completed during work hours or on your own time.
4. Accomplishments:
Up to one page description of a significant accomplishment within the past five years is required. This accomplishment can be local, regional, or national in scope, and could be a scientific study, outreach project, resolution of a systems issue or operational management. In particular, you must show how the accomplishment furthered the NWS mission, or furthered diversity, or improved customer service or operations, or increased efficiency; how teamwork or leadership skills were exercised in completing the accomplishment; and a description of your primary role in the accomplishment.
5. Core Qualifications - Up to one page explanation for each of the following core qualifications:
 - a. Interpersonal communication - List examples that show you can effectively communicate in person (e.g. media interviews, presentations).
 - b. Facilitating change - Indicate your role in the utilization or facilitation of change to further the NWS mission, improve products and services to NWS customers and partners, or improve operations.

- c. Teamwork - describe events in which you have used teamwork concepts, particularly within an operational setting.
 - d. Customer/Partner Interaction - describe actions which highlight your responding to, or meeting customer/partner needs, especially when those actions enhanced the relationship and/or resulted in improved or more relevant or beneficial products/services.
 - e. Diversity - Describe events in which you have promoted diversity, particularly within an operational setting.
 - f. Self Development - describe actions you have taken and activities you have been involved in to grow professionally and personally.
 - g. Studies and Projects - describe your professional and personal efforts in being actively involved in activities beyond the normal day to day work such as publishing papers, giving presentations, completing projects, etc.
 - h. Writing Skills - List examples that show you can effectively communicate in writing.
 - i. Variety of Assignments - give examples of the various types of work activities/programs in which you have been engaged.
 - j. Awards – list recognition you have received for activities in which you have been involved.
6. A list of three references, other than your immediate supervisor, who can verify your leadership and teamwork capabilities. The list must include the name of the reference, job title, current address, current telephone number, and e-mail address (if appropriate).

Deadline for Application Packages: Application packages must be mailed to the Boulder Human Resources Office where they will be collected and forwarded to SRH. You must make your immediate supervisor aware of your interest in the BLAST program and the submission of your application. Application packages must be **received** in Boulder Human Resources Office by close of business **August 26, 2005**. Late, incomplete, faxed, or e-mailed applications will not be accepted.

To assist you in developing an effective application package, tips for preparing your application are provided below.

BLAST Application Tips

Please understand your written application represents YOU. The application provides the first impression to the selection team or selecting official. You are initially evaluated solely based on the content of your application package. Inattention to spelling, grammar, etc. raises the question of the quality of your work and ability to attend to detail.

Presentation

Your application should:

1. Contain appropriate headings following the format of the announcement.
2. Have a consistent font size of 12 point. Avoid using a font size of 10, 8, or 6 in order to include more information into your application. Also, avoid changing font size within your application. *Tip:* Use 12 point throughout your application and be concise in your responses.
3. Have a consistent font face. Avoid changing the font face from page to page or in different sections of your application. *Tip:* Use 'Times New Roman' font face throughout your application.
4. Consist of black type on white paper. Avoid using colored fonts and paper. Remember, you want your application to look professional and have solid content rather than be eye catching or pretty.
5. Be grammatically correct and free of spelling errors. Use the tools available to you on your computer such as spell check and grammar check.
6. Be reviewed by another person for presentation and content prior to submission.

Content

1. Content matters. A well-formatted and professional looking application is important, but selection will be based on content.
2. Answer the questions and respond to the specific topics requested in the interest announcement. Be sure to directly answer the questions and avoid talking around them. When you are asked to describe your accomplishments, do so in a concise manner. Avoid simply providing definitions of what you believe leadership, diversity, teams, or other terms to be. *Tip:* when providing responses, answer the question asked, be concise (get to the point and be brief) and provide complete information.

3. Provide responses to the questions as related to leadership. Avoid merely describing your job duties (e.g., what you do on a daily basis). You should describe what you have done and are doing above and beyond the daily routine that demonstrates your leadership potential.

4. Describe the extent of your involvement. Did you lead the team/project or did you participate as a member? Was the outcome successful or not. If not, why not? An unsuccessful result does not necessarily reflect on leadership. External factors may have caused problems.

5. Provide complete information:

a) Example - When listing your awards cite, 1) date of award, beginning with most recent, 2) type of award (distinguish if local, regional or national, individual, group or office. If award was event driven - describe the extent of your involvement), 3) amount of award - if a cash award, 4) reason award was given. Awards given can recognize professional or personal accomplishments.

b) Example - When listing your training cite, 1) date(s) of training, beginning with the most recent, 2) title of course, 3) vendor, 4) grade or score if applicable. Avoid, for example, simply stating in your application that you have taken "leadership courses" - provide specifics.